

# A Unique Image of the Holy Patriarch Germanos I on a Lead Seal

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*In memory of John W. Nesbitt*

Dumbarton Oaks acquired a new Byzantine lead seal for its collection recently, from the Leu Numismatik Web Auction 16, lot 4127 (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> This seal, previously unpublished, is a particularly fine example of carving—of both sphragistic image and inscription. Its imagery is also exceptional; it bears the figure of a church hierarch, identified by inscription as Saint Germanos. The figure is beardless, a quite unusual feature for a Byzantine bishop (an iconographic detail which narrows the identification of the figure considerably), and this image of Saint Germanos is unique for Byzantine seals. Its owner is identified by the inscription on the reverse as a certain Germanos, monk and abbot of a monastery dedicated to Saint Phokas. The entry of this seal at the Leu Numismatik auction house identifies the figure as the saint Germanos who was the sixth-century bishop of Capua, and states that the monastic house of its owner was located in Trebizond. From the arguments set forth in this paper, however, it is determined that the image is that of another—the eighth-century patriarch of Constantinople, Germanos I—and that the owner of this seal belonged to the Constantinopolitan monastery of Saint Phokas.

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1 For a photograph and description of the seal provided by the auction house, see <https://leunumismatik.com/en/lot/26/4127>. The new accession number for this specimen in the Dumbarton Oaks collection is BZS.2020.010.

On the obverse of the seal there is a bust-length image of a haloed bishop, wearing on his shoulders the episcopal *omophorion* decorated with crosses, blessing with his right hand, and holding the Gospel book in his left. As said, the figure is beardless, which is most uncommon for a bishop, but of which there are a few known examples.<sup>2</sup> Immediately flanking the holy hierarch is the vertical identifying inscription: Ⓐ|Γ|Ε|Ρ—Μ|Α|Ν, Ὁ Ἁ(γίος) Γερμαν(ός) (Saint Germanos), where Ⓐ is a common ligature for *agios* (saint or holy). In the upper half of the obverse is a circular invective inscription preceded by a cross: +ΚΕΡΟΗΘΕΙΤΩCΩΔΟΝΛ, +Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δοῦλ(ῳ) (Lord, help your servant). On the reverse, the inscription in five lines reads: +ΓΕΡΜΑ|ΝΩΜΟΝΑΧΩ|Κ·ΗΓΟΥΜΕΝΟ|ΜΟΝΗCΤΘΑ|ΓΙΘΦΩΚ': +Γερμανῷ μοναχῷ κ(αὶ) ἡγουμένῳ μονῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Φωκ(ά) (Germanos, monk and *hegoumenos* of the monastery of Saint Phokas). The full inscription in translation, therefore, is: "Lord, help your servant Germanos, monk and hegoumenos of the monastery of Saint Phokas." Both the obverse and reverse bear a circular dot border. There are traces of faint surface cracks along the line of the channel on the obverse. The seal has a diameter of 2.6 cm.

The seal is datable to the tenth to eleventh century based on several details of its composition and its overall general aesthetic: the form of the letter *B* in the circular invective inscription on the obverse, with its

2 See note 13, below.



Fig. 1. Lead seal of Germanos, monk and *hegoumenos* of the monastery of Saint Phokas, tenth to eleventh century, obv.: bust of Saint Germanos, Dumbarton Oaks BZS.2020.010 (d. 26 mm). Photo courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC.

open lower loop resembling the Latin letter *R*;<sup>3</sup> the form of the letter  $\Delta$  with its base extended beyond the corners of the triangle;<sup>4</sup> the use of the ligature  $\text{Ϟ}$  for the two letters of *O* and *U* in the fourth and fifth lines of the inscription on the reverse, which generally fell out of use after the first third of the eleventh century;<sup>5</sup> the circular invocative inscription in the field of the obverse, which is most commonly encountered on specimens dating from the tenth through the mid-eleventh centuries;<sup>6</sup> and the linear, calligraphic rendering of the figure, with little modeling, large, arched eyebrows, and oversized ears, recalling figures found on seals assigned to the tenth and early eleventh centuries.<sup>7</sup>

Among 12,666 seals bearing religious figural imagery from the major published collections, the image of the saintly hierarch Germanos—whom the

Leu Numismatik Web Auction asserts is on the seal—is not found. Germanos, the sixth-century bishop of Capua, which was part of the Ostrogothic kingdom, led the papal delegation to Constantinople in 519–520 to resolve the Akakian schism between the eastern and western churches.<sup>8</sup> Although his memory was revered and celebrated in the West, especially in the region of Cassino and Capua,<sup>9</sup> there does not appear to be any commemoration or cult dedicated to him in the Eastern Church. The name Germanos of Capua does not appear among the saintly figures named Germanos in the tenth-century *Synaxarion of Constantinople*,<sup>10</sup> and it is therefore most unlikely that the figure depicted on the newly acquired Dumbarton Oaks seal is that of the Latin bishop Germanos of Capua.

The *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, however, does list six saints that bear the name Germanos, of which only one was of episcopal rank: Germanos, the eighth-century patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>11</sup> It is known that Patriarch Germanos was also a eunuch, having been castrated in 669 at the order of the emperor Constantine IV Pogonatos, after Germanos's father was executed for participating in the conspiracy that

3 N. Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* (Washington, DC, 1986), 159.

4 Oikonomides, *Dated Seals*, 160.

5 Oikonomides, *Dated Seals*, 162–63.

6 Oikonomides, *Dated Seals*, 153; and see G. Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 2, ed. J. Nesbitt (Bern, 1984), nos. 791–948, pls. 78–89.

7 For some examples, see Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 2, nos. 446, 818, 857, 860, 870, and 894; *DOSeals* 1, no. 10.1; *DOSeals* 2, nos. 8.31, 23.1, 64.1, and 72.3; *DOSeals* 3, nos. 37.1, 71.21, and 82.1; *DOSeals* 4, nos. 1.7, 11.9, 22.36, 24.4, and 62.1; *DOSeals* 5, nos. 6.19 and 42.34; *DOSeals* 7, nos. 9.9, 9.10, 13.1, 15.41, and 16.87; M. Campagnolo-Pothitou and J.-C. Cheynet, *Sceaux de la collection George Zacos au Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève* (Milan, 2016), nos. 38 and 156; and A.-K. Wassiliou-Seibt and W. Seibt, *Der byzantinische Mensch in seinem Umfeld: Weitere Bleisiegel der Sammlung Zarnitz im Museum August Kestner* (Rahden, 2015), nos. 45 and 48.

8 <https://leunumismatik.com/en/lot/26/4127>. For a brief overview of the Akakian schism, see *ODB* 1:42–43.

9 For an overview of Germanos of Capua, see *DHGE* 20:905–6; and *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, ed. A. Di Berardino, trans. J. T. Papa et al., 3 vols. (Downers Grove, IL, 2014), 2:124–25.

10 *Synaxarium CP*, 1069.

11 *Synaxarium CP*, 1069.

led to the assassination of Constans II.<sup>12</sup> These hagiographic details correspond with the beardless image of the saintly hierarch on our seal, further reinforcing the identification of the sphragistic image with that of the eighth-century Constantinopolitan hierarch. Germanos is also consistently represented as beardless in the few surviving images of him from the Byzantine and post-Byzantine period.<sup>13</sup>

12 For an account of this event in the life of the hierarch, see *Synaxarium CP*, 678; and L. Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I. von Konstantinopel (715–730): Versuch einer endgültigen chronologischen Fixierung des Lebens und Wirkens des Patriarchen, mit dem griechisch-deutschen Text der Vita Germani am Schluß der Arbeit* (Würzburg, 1975), 63–64 and 202. The Greek text of the *Vita* (BHG 697), with an accompanying German translation, is found at 200–41, and Lamza's discussion concerning the eleventh-century date of the *Vita* is found at 11–15. See also O. F. A. Meinardus, "The Beardless Patriarch: St. Germanos," *Μακεδονικά* 13 (1973): 178–86; and *ODB* 2:846. More recently, C. Messis, *Les eunuques à Byzance, entre réalité et imaginaire* (Paris, 2014), 127–28, notes that there have been varying scholarly opinions concerning the date of the *Vita*, placing it between the eighth and eleventh centuries, or even later, as cited in *ibid.*, n. 44.

13 Meinardus, "Beardless Patriarch." For the eleventh-century fresco depicting the beardless hierarch Germanos in the church of Saint Nicholas of the Roof on Cyprus, see P. Karlin-Hayter, "Iconoclasm," in *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. C. Mango (New York, 2002), 155. For discussion and dating of these eleventh-century frescoes, see A. and J. Stylianos, "Ο Ναός του Αγίου Νικολάου της Στέγης παρά την Κακοπετρίαν: Άγνωστον Μουσείον Βυζαντινής Τέχνης," *Κυπρ. Σπ.* 10 (1946): 95–196, esp. 116–17 for the image of Germanos; M. Soteriou, "Αἱ Ἀρχικαὶ Τοιχογραφίαι τοῦ Ναοῦ τοῦ Ἀγ. Νικολάου τῆς Στέγης Κύπρου," in *Χαριστήριον εἰς Ἀναστάσιον Κ. Ὁρλάνδον*, ed. M. Nikolaïde-Gavrile, vol. 3 (Athens, 1966), 133–41; and M. Sacopoulou, "A Saint-Nicolas-du-Toit: Deux effigies inédites de patriarches constantinopolitains," *CahArch* 17 (1967): 193–202, esp. 199 and fig. 7 for Germanos. For the image of the beardless Germanos appearing in the third row of the May calendar icon, ca. 1200, on Mount Sinai, see G. Soteriou and M. Soteriou, *Εἰκόνες τῆς Μονῆς Σινᾶ*, 2 vols. (Athens, 1956 and 1958), 1: pls. 128 and 130, 2:117–19. See also Sacopoulou, "A Saint-Nicolas-du-Toit," 199. In her study of the Sinai calendar icons, N. P. Ševčenko, "Marking Holy Time: The Byzantine Calendar Icons," in *Byzantine Icons: Art, Technique and Technology*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Heraklion, 2002), 51–62, at 55–56 (repr. in eadem, *The Celebration of the Saints in Byzantine Art and Liturgy*, Variorum Collected Studies Series [Abingdon, UK, 2013], IV), discusses the Sinai May icon and the presence of the image of the beardless eunuch Patriarch Ignatios the Younger for the commemoration of the Third Finding of the Head of Saint John the Baptist at the celebration of 25 May, but does not mention the presence of the image of the beardless hierarch Germanos in the same icon. For a depiction of the eunuch, beardless, sainted Ignatios the Younger, patriarch of Constantinople (847–858, 867–877), see C. Mango, *Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul* (Washington, DC, 1962), 52, fig. 62; and C. Mango and E. J. W. Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: The Church

Germanos was patriarch for fifteen years (715–730). As an iconophile, he came into conflict with the iconoclastic policies of the emperor Leo III and was forced to resign the patriarchal throne in 730, when he was replaced by the iconoclast patriarch Anastasios. Germanos retired to Platanion, most likely in the Blachernai region of Constantinople, his family home, where he died on 12 May, possibly by 741. He was buried in the monastery of the Chora in Constantinople.<sup>14</sup>

Fathers in the North Tympanum," *DOP* 26 (1972): 1–41, at 9–11, 28–30, figs. 12–16, for the late ninth-century mosaic of this hierarch in the north tympanum of Hagia Sophia. See also A. Grabar, "Un calice byzantin aux images des patriarches de Constantinople," *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Έτ.* 4 (1964/1965): 45–51; Sacopoulou, "A Saint-Nicolas-du-Toit," 195–99, fig. 5; K. M. Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium* (Chicago, 2003), 118–19, fig. 3; S. F. Tougher, "Holy Eunuchs! Masculinity and Eunuch Saints in Byzantium," in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. H. Cullum and K. J. Lewis (Cardiff, 2004), 93–108; *idem*, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society* (London, 2008), 70, 87, and 112; and B. Krsmanović and L. Milanović, "Beards That Matter: Visual Representations of Patriarch Ignatios in Byzantine Art," *Zograf* 41 (2017): 25–36. For a discussion of Patriarch Ignatios's seals and their imagery understood in the context of ninth-century Iconoclasm, see J. Cotsonis, "The Imagery of Patriarch Ignatios' Lead Seals and the *Rota Fortunae* of Ninth-Century Byzantine Ecclesio-Political Policies," in *Servant of the Gospel: Studies in Honor of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, ed. T. FitzGerald (Brookline, MA, 2011), 52–98 (repr. in *idem*, *The Religious Figural Imagery of Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1, *Studies on the Image of Christ, the Virgin and Narrative Scenes*, Variorum Collected Studies [Abingdon, UK, 2020], 75–109). For a discussion of the prominent position of various eunuchs during the middle Byzantine period, see Ringrose, *Perfect Servant*, 111–41 and 163–83; Tougher, *Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society*, esp. 54–67; *idem*, "Byzantine Court Eunuchs and the Macedonian Dynasty (867–1056): Family, Power and Gender," in *Celibate and Childless Men in Power: Ruling Eunuchs and Bishops in the Pre-Modern World*, ed. A. Höfert, M. M. Mesley, and S. Tolino (Abingdon, UK, 2018), 229–45; and Messis, *Les eunuques à Byzance*, 97–118.

14 *Synaxarium CP*, 678–80; and Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I*, 218–41. See also A. Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature (650–850)*, ed. L. F. Sherry and C. Angelidi (Athens, 1999), 55–59; D. Stein, "Germanos I (715–730)," in *Die Patriarchen der ikonoklastischen Zeit: Germanos I.–Methodios I. (715–847)*, ed. R.-J. Lilie (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), 5–21; and K. Staurianos, "Ὁ Ἅγιος Γερμανὸς Ἀ' ὁ Ὁμολογητὴς Πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως: Βίος-Ἔργα-Διδασκαλία, Συμβολὴ στὴν περίοδο τῆς Εἰκονομαχίας" (Athens, 2003), 19–41. For more recent discussion of Germanos as a moderate defender of sacred images, and not the staunch iconophile apologist as described in posthumous Byzantine texts, see M.-F. Auzépy, "La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalcé par Léon III: Propagande ou réalité?," *Byzantion* 60 (1990): 445–92, at 458–60 and 489 (repr. in eadem, *L'histoire des iconoclastes* [Paris, 2007], 154–56 and 175–76); Stein,



He was condemned by the iconoclast Synod of Hieria in 754 (Γερμανῶ τῷ διγνώμῳ καὶ ξυλλογᾷ τῇ ἀνάθεμα),<sup>15</sup> but subsequently was rehabilitated and acclaimed by the iconophile Synod of Nicaea II in 787 (Γερμανοῦ τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη)<sup>16</sup> and in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy* of 843, along with the other Constantinopolitan iconophile patriarchs Tarasios, Nikephoros, and Methodios (Γερμανοῦ, Ταρασίου, Νικηφόρου καὶ Μεθοδίου, τῶν ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀρχιερέων Θεοῦ καὶ τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας προμάχων καὶ διδασκάλων, αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη).<sup>17</sup> In the ninth/tenth-century *typikon* of the Great Church, found in the monastery of Saint John the Theologian on Patmos,<sup>18</sup> as well as in the tenth-century *typikon* of the Great Church of Hagia Sophia,<sup>19</sup> his liturgical commemoration is celebrated on 12 May and prescribed for celebration in Hagia Sophia. As noted above, Germanos is commemorated in the tenth-century *Synaxarion of Constantinople* on 12 May. Thus, he relatively quickly entered the choir of the saints, and close in time to the liturgical sources outlined here, he also enters the realm of the sphragistic saintly figures. A similar rapid enrollment in the ranks of the saints

and subsequent sigillographic imagery is also observed with another patriarch in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Patriarch Antony II Kauleas, who died in 901 and is listed in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* for commemoration on 12 February.<sup>20</sup> He is included in the *Menologion* of Basil II, Vat. gr. 1613, ca. 1000, with his image accompanying the hagiographic text,<sup>21</sup> and is depicted on a seal assigned to the eleventh century.<sup>22</sup>

The earliest surviving image of the sainted patriarch Germanos I is that of the mosaic fragment in the room above the southwest vestibule in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, assigned to the 870s.<sup>23</sup> The fragment is missing the head and is thus not of service for a comparison of the portrait features of the mosaic and seal, but there are the remains of his nimbus and he is depicted wearing the remains of his episcopal omophorion decorated with crosses. He is clearly

"Germanos I (715–730)," 14; Staurianos, *Ὁ Ἅγιος Γερμανὸς Α΄*, 135–40; L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era, c. 680–850: A History* (New York, 2011), 79–80, 94–105, 122–25 (124, n. 184 for the location of Platanion), and 136–39; R. Price, trans., *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, TTH 68 (Liverpool, 2018), 250–58; and A. Louth, "The Theological Argument about Images in the 8th Century," in *A Companion to Byzantine Iconoclasm*, ed. M. Humphreys (Leiden, 2021), 401–24. See also "Germanos 8" in the index of names for the Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire: pbe.kcl.ac.uk/data/D30/F50.htm (accessed 22 January 2022).

15 E. Lamberz, ed., *Concilium universale Nicaenum secundum: Concilii actiones VI–VII*, Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum, series secunda 3.3 (Berlin, 2016), 782, 3. For an English translation, see Price, *Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea*, 539. See also Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I*, 180; Stein, "Germanos I," 5–6 and 15–16; and Staurianos, *Ὁ Ἅγιος Γερμανὸς Α΄*, 45–47.

16 Lamberz, *Concilium universale Nicaenum secundum*, 856, 6 (Engl. trans., Price, *Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea*, 578). See also Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I*, 180–81; Stein, "Germanos I," 6 and 15–17; and Staurianos, *Ὁ Ἅγιος Γερμανὸς Α΄*, 48–51.

17 J. Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie," *TM* 2 (1967): 1–316, at 53. See also Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I*, 181 and 187, n. 9; and Stein, "Germanos I," 17.

18 A. Dmitrievskij, *Opisane liturgiĭskikh rukopisej*, vol. 1 (Kiev, 1895; repr. Hildesheim, 1965), 72. See also Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I*, 181; and Staurianos, *Ὁ Ἅγιος Γερμανὸς Α΄*, 43.

19 J. Mateos, *Le typicon de la Grande Église: Ms. Sainte-Croix no. 40, X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1962), 290–91. See also Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I*, 181; and Staurianos, *Ὁ Ἅγιος Γερμανὸς Α΄*, 43.

20 *Synaxarium CP*, 462.

21 *El "Menologio" de Basilio II Emperador de Bizancio* (Vat. gr. 1613) (Madrid, 2005), 393. See also [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.gr.1613](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1613). For the dating of the manuscript, see A. Cutler, "The Psalter of Basil II: Part II," *Arte Veneta* 31 (1977): 9–15.

22 J. Cotsonis and J. Nesbitt, "An Eleventh-Century Seal with a Representation of Patriarch Antony II Kauleas," *Byzantion* 74 (2004): 517–26 (repr. in J. Cotsonis, *The Religious Figural Imagery of Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 2, *Studies on Images of the Saints and on Personal Piety* [Abingdon, UK, 2020], 43–51).

23 P. A. Underwood, "A Preliminary Report of Some Unpublished Mosaics in Hagia Sophia: Season of 1950 of the Byzantine Institute," *AJA* 55.4 (1951): 367–70, first suggested a date of the late ninth century for the mosaics in this room; shortly later, in idem, "Notes on the Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul: 1954," *DOP* 9/10 (1956): 291–300, at 292, he considers the mosaics to belong to the second half of the ninth century. Mango, *Materials*, 44–46, lists and describes the mosaics in the southwest vestibule, and at pp. 97–99 provides a general dating for the figural decorative program of Hagia Sophia as the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Even later, R. Cormack and E. J. W. Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: The Rooms above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp," *DOP* 31 (1977): 175–251, at 223–24 and 235–47, fig. 41, assigned this mosaic, and those in the room over the ramp, to the decade of the 870s. Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I*, 181, refers to the mosaic fragment of Germanos's portrait, and provides in note 12 (pp. 188–91) an extensive quote about the mosaics in the room above the southwest vestibule from A. Grabar, *L'iconoclasm byzantin* (Paris, 1957), 193–94, but in the photograph found in Lamza's volume he erroneously identifies as the patriarch Germanos the bearded figure who appears to the right of Germanos, a figure whose inscription has not survived but who has been identified by subsequent scholars as the iconophile patriarch Nikephoros. This error is repeated by Stein, "Germanos I," 16, n. 49, and Staurianos, *Ὁ Ἅγιος Γερμανὸς Α΄*, 43.

identified by the surviving flanking inscription: Ο ΑΓΙΟC ΓΕΡΜΑΝΟC (Saint Germanos).

Although visually grouped there with the other sainted iconophile patriarchs Tarasios, Methodios, and Nikephoros, and commemorated with them in the text of the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, Germanos does not appear in the late and post-Byzantine icons of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, even though other holy figures who were not contemporary with the 843 celebration, such as Theodosia and Theodore the Stoudite (759–826), are represented.<sup>24</sup> When Germanos is depicted in middle, late, and post-Byzantine art, he is consistently shown as a beardless hierarch, as in the arch of the *diakonikon* in the church of Saint Nicholas of the Roof on Cyprus,<sup>25</sup> in the Sinai May calendar icon,<sup>26</sup> and in the apse fresco of the church of the Virgin Peribleptos–Saint Clement in Ohrid.<sup>27</sup>

Related to the discussion here are two interesting seals already in the Dumbarton Oaks collection that are similar (Figs. 2 and 3): they bear on the obverse a bust image of a beardless hierarch, dressed in his phelonion and omophorion, holding a cross in his right hand and a Gospel book in his left, and flanked by crosslets. The monogram of the owner on the reverse has been read as “Germanos,” and the editors of the Dumbarton Oaks seal database have assigned these specimens to the late seventh to early eighth century.<sup>28</sup> These two seals were previously published by George Zacos and Alexander Veglery, who assigned them to the early eighth century, noting the high quality of their engraving and stylistic resemblance to the solidi issued during the

second reign of the emperor Justinian II (705–711).<sup>29</sup> The Dumbarton Oaks database commentary for these two specimens suggests the possibility that the bishop depicted is Germanos of Capua. Yet this is most unlikely for the reasons outlined above. Another puzzling detail of these two specimens is that the hierarch has no nimbus, leading to the online commentary noting that this may not be the image of a saint. That, too, is unlikely since there are numerous examples of seals from the sixth through the tenth centuries with saintly images without a nimbus.<sup>30</sup>

On early Byzantine seals, flanking crosses are seen accompanying only holy figures.<sup>31</sup> These images would not be the “portrait” of the seal owner; except for emperors, empresses, and caesars, those who issued seals did not place their own images alone on either the obverse or reverse,<sup>32</sup> and there are just seven examples of the owner of a seal depicted in the presence of a saintly figure among the 12,666 seals bearing religious figural imagery drawn from the major published collections.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, since the hierarch on these two Dumbarton Oaks seals holds the cross of a martyr or confessor, it is most certainly an image of a sainted hierarch, as is seen on sphragistic examples of the Church Father John Chrysostom, who is recognized as a confessor because of the hardships he suffered in exile.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, these two seals bear on their obverses an image of an as yet unidentified saintly, beardless

24 For the icon, ca. 1400, in the British Museum, see H. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New York, 2004), no. 78. For a discussion of this icon in comparison with later examples of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, see A. Markopoulos, “Ο Θράμβος τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας στὴν Εἰκόνα τοῦ Βρετανικοῦ Μουσείου: Τὰ Πρόσωπα καὶ τὰ Κείμενα,” *Δελτ. Χρυστ. Αρχ. Έπ.*, per. 4, 26 (2007): 345–52.

25 See n. 13 above.

26 See n. 13 above.

27 S. E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary* (Seattle, 1999), fig. 42, in which Germanos is depicted as the first on the left of the row of bust-length images of hierarchs. See also Meinardus, “Beardless Patriarch,” 178–86; and Staurianos, “Ὁ Ἅγιος Γερμανὸς Α΄,” 43–44.

28 See [www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1955.1.224](http://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1955.1.224) and [www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1958.106.5599](http://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1958.106.5599).

29 G. Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1.2 (Basel, 1972), no. 1300a and b, pl. 102. For the solidi of Justinian II, see J. D. Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II (685–695, 705–711 A.D.)* (New York, 1959), esp. 59–62, 90 and pl. IX, fig. 38.

30 Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1.2, nos. 1260–67, 1269–71, and 1307; vol. 2.3, no. 2966; and Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 2, no. 821.

31 For example, see Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1.2, nos. 1099–1324, passim, pls. 92–103.

32 For series of seals with effigies of emperors and empresses, see Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 2, nos. 1–128; and *DOSeals* 6, nos. 1–109.

33 V. Laurent, *Les corpus des sceaux de l’empire byzantin*, vol. 5.1, *L’église de Constantinople: La hiérarchie* (Paris, 1963), nos. 464 and 803; *ibid.*, vol. 5.2, *L’église de Constantinople: Le clergé et les moines* (Paris, 1965), no. 1436; *ibid.*, vol. 2, *L’administration centrale* (Paris, 1981), no. 542; Campagnolo-Pothitou and Cheynet, *Genève*, nos. 74 and 386A and B (B = Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 2, no. 533).

34 For example, Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 2, no. 513. For a brief discussion of the term “confessor,” as one who suffered for the faith but not to the point of death as a martyr, see *ODB* 1:493–94.





Fig. 2. Lead seal of Germanos, seventh to eighth century, obv.: bust of a bishop saint, Dumbarton Oaks BZS.1955.1.224 (d. 31 mm). Photo courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC.



Fig. 3. Lead seal of Germanos, seventh to eighth century, obv.: bust of a bishop saint, Dumbarton Oaks BZS.1958.106.5599 (d. 34 mm). Photo courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC.

hierarch who was a confessor, and were issued by an owner with the name Germanos.

Although it is tempting to identify this holy, beardless hierarch with that of the saintly, beardless patriarch Germanos depicted on the newly acquired Dumbarton Oaks seal, the identification is most unlikely in light of the date assignment to the late seventh to early eighth century given the two seals. As noted above, the memory of Germanos was not rehabilitated until the iconophile synod of Nicaea II in 787, which would require a seal dating, at the earliest, to

the late eighth century. In addition, statistically there is not a high correspondence between the names of seal owners and the sphragistic images of their homonymous saints.<sup>35</sup> In Rodolphe Guiland's study of eunuchs in the Byzantine empire, there are no pre-iconoclastic

35 J. Cotsonis, "Onomastics, Gender, Office and Images on Byzantine Lead Seals: A Means of Investigating Personal Piety," *BMGS* 32.1 (2008): 5–10 (repr. in idem, *Religious Figural Imagery*, vol. 2, 215–20).

eunuch bishops listed.<sup>36</sup> Shaun Tougher's select list of late Roman and Byzantine eunuchs includes two bishops belonging to the pre-iconoclastic period, yet neither of them is recorded as a saint.<sup>37</sup> And in Charis Messis's recent volume dedicated to the history and role of the Byzantine eunuch, which includes a survey of the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, there is reference to just one pre-iconoclastic, saintly, eunuch hierarch—Makedonios, patriarch of Constantinople (496–511).<sup>38</sup> He is commemorated on 25 April by the Byzantine Church.<sup>39</sup> Messis recounts, however, that Makedonios was not known to be a eunuch until he was falsely accused of pederasty and proved his innocence by revealing his castrated condition.<sup>40</sup> According to Messis, either Makedonios was bearded, due to castration later in life, or the author of the history had repeated a literary trope in which saintly figures are falsely accused and by dramatic revelations are proved innocent. Nevertheless, it is most unlikely that these two similar seals from the Dumbarton Oaks collection bear the image of the sainted patriarch Makedonios, and the identity of their beardless, holy hierarch remains uncertain.

The owner of the newly acquired Dumbarton Oaks seal with the image of the saintly patriarch Germanos was an abbot of a monastery dedicated to Saint Phokas. This saint has a complicated hagiographic tradition, and may be a conflation of three literary traditions: a martyred gardener from Sinope; a son of a noble shipwright from Herakleia Pontike; and a bishop of Sinope martyred during the reign of Trajan.<sup>41</sup> In the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, Phokas the gardener and Phokas the bishop are both commemorated

on 22 September and on 22–23 July, and for the latter dates there is also a commemoration of Phokas the bishop and the translation of his relics.<sup>42</sup> As archbishop of Constantinople (398–404), John Chrysostom composed a homily on the occasion of the arrival of Phokas's relics at the capital, which took place sometime between 400 and 404, but his text does not specify which Phokas is celebrated, only that the relics were brought from Pontus.<sup>43</sup> By the tenth century, the commemoration of this translation was celebrated in the chapel of Saint Phokas located within the precinct of the church of Saint John the Evangelist, near the Great Church of Hagia Sophia.<sup>44</sup> Finally, a martyr Phokas is commemorated on 18 December<sup>45</sup> and a Saint Phokas is celebrated on 2 August.<sup>46</sup> When Phokas the saint is depicted, it is usually as the bishop.<sup>47</sup>

It is uncertain which monastic house of Saint Phokas the owner was abbot of. The editors of the Leu Numismatik Web Auction assert that the monastery dedicated to Saint Phokas was located in Trebizond; at least one monastic foundation dedicated to Saint Phokas in Trebizond is known to have existed since the middle of the ninth century.<sup>48</sup> Yet there is a Constantinopolitan monastery dedicated to Saint Phokas that can be traced to the second half of the ninth century.<sup>49</sup> Originally it was a palace built by Arsaber, the brother of the iconoclast patriarch John VII Grammatikos, but it was subsequently acquired by the emperor Basil I, who converted it to

36 R. Guiland, "Les eunuques dans l'empire byzantin: Étude de titulature et prosopographie byzantines," *Études byzantines* 1 (1943): 197–238 (repr. in idem, *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines*, vol. 1 [Berlin, 1967], 165–97).

37 Tougher, *Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society*, 154 (no. 124, Leontius) and 157 (no. 144, Narses).

38 Messis, *Les eunuques à Byzance*, 108.

39 *Synaxarium CP*, 630.

40 For the historical account, see Evagrius Scholastikos, *Church History* 3.32, in Évagre le Scholastique, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier, trans. A.-J. Festugière, B. Grillet, and G. Sabbah (Paris, 2011), 478–79. For an English translation, see M. Whitby, trans., *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, TTH 33 (Liverpool, 2000), 172–73.

41 *ODB* 3:166–67.

42 *Synaxarium CP*, 67–70, 835–36, 837 (line 42) and 840 (line 43).

43 PG 50:699–706. For an English translation, see John Chrysostom, *The Cult of the Saints: Select Homilies and Letters*, trans. and annot. W. Meyer (Crestwood, NY, 2006), 75–87, where Meyer notes that later tradition associated this homily with Phokas the bishop from Sinope.

44 *Synaxarium CP*, 67–70, 835–36, 837 (line 42) and 840 (line 43). For this chapel, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*, pt. 1, *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique*, vol. 3, *Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1969), 497.

45 *Synaxarium CP*, 324.

46 *Synaxarium CP*, 866.

47 *ODB* 3:167.

48 R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins: Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galésios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique* (Paris, 1975), 293–94, refers to various sources that indicate the possibility of another monastery dedicated to Saint Phokas.

49 Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, 498–99; the author also testifies to the existence of two Constantinopolitan churches or chapels dedicated to Saint Phokas.

a monastery.<sup>50</sup> This emperor erected numerous buildings, endowed the foundation with much property, and installed a community of pious monastics.<sup>51</sup> He even appointed the abbot, Peter of Galatia, a well-known solitary of Mount Olympus, who was later sainted.<sup>52</sup>

Given the history of the Constantinopolitan monastery of Saint Phokas, it is more likely that Germanos, the owner of the newly acquired Dumbarton Oaks seal, was the abbot of this monastic foundation rather than one in the faraway region of Trebizond. The abbot likely selected the image of his homonymous saint for the obverse of his seal, even though, as noted above, homonymity was not a strong factor in determining one's sphragistic imagery. Yet in this case, it is extremely fitting that he would choose his like-named saint, since Patriarch Germanos I was the first patriarch to suffer as a confessor for iconophile orthodoxy during the trials of the iconoclast period. The patriarch's image on this seal vindicates the triumph of the iconodule party, especially given that this monastic property had once been so closely associated with the iconoclast heretics, but now had been converted into a religious house by the pious and iconophile emperor Basil I. The monastery's history is recounted in the texts of the *Theophanes Continuatus* and in the *Vita Basilii*, both composed in the middle years of the tenth century under the

supervision of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos,<sup>53</sup> and thus relatively close in time to the period of the newly acquired Dumbarton Oaks seal. The memory of the historic events of the religious house's foundation would still have been preserved in the zeitgeist of Abbot Germanos and his contemporaries. In addition, as outlined above, the relics of Saint Phokas were also in Constantinople, and the yearly commemoration of this translation took place in a prestigious church in the center of the city. Similarly, as previously mentioned, the saintly Germanos was buried in the Constantinopolitan monastery of Chora, and the annual liturgical celebration of his feast on 12 May was prescribed for Hagia Sophia, the cathedral of the city. All these factors would lend further prestige to the position of Germanos, the abbot or hegoumenos of the monastic foundation of Saint Phokas. By placing an image of the sainted Patriarch Germanos on his seal, along with the prayerful invocation addressed to the hierarch, the abbot Germanos visually expressed his personal hopes in the saint's efficacious intercession, participating in the prestigious aura of two holy hierarchs' presence and liturgical memory in the capital city, while simultaneously proclaiming membership among those iconophiles on the right side of ecclesiastical history.

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50 Theophanes Continuatus 4.8, in M. Featherstone and J. Signes-Codoñer, eds., *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur libri I–IV*, CFHB 53 (Berlin, 2015), 222–25. See also Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, 498.

51 *Vita Basilii* 94, in I. Ševčenko, ed., *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur liber quo Vita Basilii Imperatoris amplexitur*, CFHB 42 (Berlin, 2011), 306–7. See also Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, 498.

52 *Synaxarium CP*, 125–26. See also Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, 498.

53 Theophanes Continuatus 4.8 (Featherstone and Signes-Codoñer, *Chronographiae*, 224–25, line 4) and *Vita Basilii* 94 (Ševčenko, *Chronographiae*, 306–7, lines 16–21).

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